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Malinda and the Duke

By

Mary Bonham

Price 25 Cents



The Willis N. Bugbee Co.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO., SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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MALINDA AND THE DUKE

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Mary Bonham

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PS635
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Malinda and the Duke

CHARACTERS

MISS MALINDA BARLOW*Sentimental Old Maid*
DUKE OF NEW CASTLE*Miss Malinda's Beau*
ORALEE*Chief of the Fun Makers*
RUTH }
BLANCHE }*Her Assistants*
NELLIE }
MARY }
SNOWBALL*Colored Fun*
MOLLY*Irish Wit*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About thirty minutes.*



CLD 62833

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Malinda and the Duke

SCENE: *Sitting room with a closet door in view.*
MOLLY is discovered dusting.

(Enter SNOWBALL.)

SNOWBALL. Look heah, Miss Molly Irish, dar ain't no use fo' yo' wastin' so much elbow oil sweepin' an' dustin' dis room. 'Tain't no time fo' it's all dirt again. (*Sits down and rocks.*)

MOLLY. If yez plaze, wull yez tell me why it don't nade dustin' an' shwapin'? I can see more than wan koind iv trash in it this minute. (*Haughtily.*) Whin me missis gives me the dust order I ain't sittin' up here tindin' to *your* skilletts.

SNOW. Huh, Miss High an' Mighty, I predicticates dat dar whirlwind o' city gals from ole Virginny is gwinter whirl in heah terrectly an' swape fo' yo'. Ef yo' can stan' 'em it's more'n I can. Dey has jes' naturally bottled up a cyclone an' brung it up heah an' turned it loose fo' to caper roun' dese ole Catskills. Yes'm, I'se lookin' any minute fo' a storm ter bust loose. Why dem ar young ladies done licked all de dough off'n my cake pans an' sopped de gravy off'n de skilletts fo' I kin slap 'em wid de dishrag. Dey eben take de chickens outen de fryin' pan an' eat 'em raw. An' furderno' dey says dey's gwine picnie right up dar whar ole Rip Van Winkle slep fo' twenty yeaahs, an' dey's gwine dance de Virginny Reel right spang whar dem ole Dutchers rolled dar nine-pins an' danced de double shuffle. (*Hums and skips.*)

MOLLY. Do you mane to tell me that the spirits iv thim Dutch-min still dances on the mountain?

SNOW. Deed I does. (*Aside.*) Belieb I'll fool dis ol' gal. (*Aloud.*) Yes'm, dey says dat eb'ry yeaah dem ol' bay-window Dutchers comes back an' carries on sumpin turrible. Miss Malinda's awful skeered dat one ob dem Dutchers gwine git under her bed or in her closet. She done look undah de bed an' in de closet free times a day an' Sunday too. I speet mebbe a ghos' would s'prise yo' right now if yo' done look in dat closet. (*Points to door.*)

MOLLY. Och, murther! If there's a ghost in there I'll jist let the whirlwind do the dustin'. (*Runs out, losing shoe.*)

SNOW (*laughing*). Good ebenin' to yo', Molly Irish! I done skeered dat gal right outen her shoe. Now I'se jes' gwinter see wat's in dis lettah dat I done foun' on de paf comin up de steps. It suttinly am funny writin'. Mebbe tain't no' count an' mebbe 'tis. P-a-r-i-s, Paris, F-r-a-n-c-e, France. Oh golly wat yo' done tink of dat. I suah has gotter put on my specks. (*Puts on large glasses.*) Dis am awful hard to read. M-a, ma, C-h-e-r-e, cheer—M-a-l-i-n-d-a, Malinda—Ma cheer Malinda—shucks! (*Folds letter.*) I'se jes' gwinter turn dis dog latin ober to dem whirlwind gals. (*Puts letter in her shoe.*) B'lieve I'll hab some fun wid dem Virginnyite gals bein's I'se from Alabam. Heah dey comes now so I'll jes' hide in dis closet. (*Exit in closet.*)

(Enter girls laughing.)

ORALEE. Oh, I've had such good luck today! I caught six suckers.

RUTH. Gee! Isn't it fun to fish when you can catch them one right after the other?

BLANCHE. Not if you have to bait the hook. Ugh!

MARY. Hark! What was that? Something in the closet?

RUTH. Maybe it was a spook.

NELLIE. Nonsense! Don't talk of spooks in broad day light.
(*Groans and noises in closet; girls scream and jump upon chairs.*)

BLANCHE. Oh! oh! Help! Help! (*Wails.*)

NELLIE. I wish I was back in Dixie. (*Wails.*)

MARY. Maybe it's a burglar and we'll all be murdered. (*Wails.*)

BLANCHE. Or an Indian with a tomahawk.

RUTH. More likely it's the spook of old Rip Van Winkle come to ha'nt us for sayin' we were going to tent on his camp ground.

ORA. Oh dear! S'pose it should be Ichabod Crane and he should throw his head at us. (*Hides under table.*)

NELLIE. Fiddlesticks! Don't you know it was Brown Bones that threw a pumpkin at Ichabod.

MARY. Then maybe it's some one come to kidnap us. I dreamed last night we were all kidnapped. O-o-oh! (*Falls on floor.*)

ALL. Oh dear! Oh dear! (*Loud groans in closet.*)

(*Enter MOLLY.*)

MOLLY. Faith an' be jabbers! Phwat's goin' on here thot you're all yellin' an' actin' loike crazy loons?

BLANCHE. Murder, Molly! There's a man in the closet!
(*All wail.*)

MOLLY. Begorry I jist bet it's that ould spook thot shtays in the Catskill Mountains. (*Hears groans.*) Och! Murderation, to be shure! It's the same spook that haythen naygur did be tellin' me about. Faith, I'll get me gun. (*Runs out.*)

ORA. We'll hold him in, Capt. Molly. (*ORA and RUTH hold door. If desired girls may sing, "Johnny Get Your Gun," using "MOLLY" instead of "Johnny."*)

(*Re-enter MOLLY with old gun.*)

MOLLY. Begorry! Open the door an' let me pepper him so full iv shot he won't wake up for a thousand years.

(*Girls open door and MOLLY points gun.*)

SNOWBALL (*inside*). Me-ow, me-ow, me-ow! (*Very loud.*)

ORA. It's not an Indian, that's sure.

RUTH. Nor a spook—

MARY. Nor a ha'nt—

BLANCH. Nor a burglar—

ALL. But a CAT. (*Calling.*) Kitty! Kitty! Kitty!

RUTH. Come out, kitty. (*Opens door wider and SNOWBALL crawls out mewin'.*)

MOLLY (*grabbing her lost shoe and throwing it at SNOWBALL*). Ye haythen baste! Ye'd better be out in the kitchen 'tindin' to thim cakes that be blacker than your face. Begorra, me thinks ye've turned the whirlwind into a tornado.

SNOW (*to MOLLY*). Look heah, woman, if yo' knowed dar was a

big, fat lub-letter in de pos' office fo' yo' wouldn't yo' be hustlin' ober dar arter it? Bet yo' wouldn't kotch dis chile foolin' away no time wid a nigger if I had a letter waitin' fo' me.

MOLLY. Faix, mebbe the dear bye is dead an' he's writin' to tell me about it. (*Runs off.*)

MARY. Snowball, you certainly did give us a fright. My knees shake yet.

SNOW. I'se mighty glad it were in de knees stead ob de heart.

NELLIE. Let me see myself. (*Looks in glass.*) I thought I'd be as gray as Stanley when he came out of the African jungle.

ORA. I know that scare undid all my curls.

RUTH. And I'll always wear white roses in my cheeks.

BLANCHE. I'll never grow another inch.

SNOW. Lawsy, honeys, yo'se all right—jes' lak de poppies out in de yard—

Dat bend an' blow

As de whirlwinds go,

like dis. (*Bends back and forth. Sees letter.*) Law, sakes! I mos' fo'got. Heah's a sticky lub-letter dat I done foun' in de paf. I can't make out de pronunciatum ob de wuds, but I spect yo' kin ontangle 'em. (*Gives letter to ORA.*)

ORA. Let me see it. (*Examines it.*) O girls, it's Frenchy. Nothing doing.

NELLIE. I can read it. I can read French like a book.

RUTH. Or me. I invaded Gaul with Caesar once.

NELLIE. It isn't polite to read other peoples' letters, but under the circumstances—well someone may be sick, or—

RUTH. Or a hundred reasons why we should read that lost letter.

NELLIE. Here goes (*reads*). Paris, France. (*Use date a week in advance of present.*) This is important—

SNOW. Yas'm, dat's 'portant, case Paris, France is *over sea* an' *oversee* means to boss. I allus oversees de cookin' an' sometimes I mos' generally has to oversee dat Irish gal.

ORA. Why, Snowball, Molly is a nice girl and—

SNOW. Dat's all so, Miss Ora, but dat don't argument she ain't *green*. Why de odder day de missus ax her to fin' her a cricket to put her foot on an' dat gal turned ober ebry rock on de place to fin' one. She say she ain't nebber heah ob a foot stool bein' a cricket. Now wat yo' know 'bout dat? Reckon I bettah go'n see wat she's up to now. (*Exit.*)

MARY. Nellie, my curiosity is gritting it's teeth to know what's in that letter.

NELLIE. Oh, there's oceans of fun in it.

ORA. Tell us quick. We're for fun.

NELLIE. Well, sit flat on the floor and (*deep voice*) "lend me your ears." (*All sit in anxious attitude.*) You all know Miss Malinda, our spinster friend?

ORA. Yes, that old maid, rich in fields of ore.

BLANCHE. Why don't you say that "Lady in Waiting?"

NELLIE. That's it exactly—Lady in Waiting,—for this letter is written to her from a gent in France who is expected here almost any day to see her.

RUTH. Here? Won't that be fun! How sets my cap, Blanche? (*Pretends to arrange cap.*)

NELLIE. You needn't be setting your cap, Ruth. This Duke is head over heels in love with Miss Malinda—but it will be fun for us to flirt with him a little.

ORA. Oh that is a rare thought. Nellie, I have an idea for some fun.

ALL. Explode it then.

ORA. Well, you know Miss Malinda is mortally afraid of some one getting into her closet and now this fear of hers is a gold mine for fun. Snowball's prank has given me the cue. I long to be the Duke in Malinda's closet.

MARY. Gracious, you are daring! Are you prepared for the worst?

ORA. Hush, here she comes! Don't mention Snowball, the closet, or our scare. Be calm.

(*Enter MALINDA.*)

MALINDA. Oh my dear girls! (*Girls rise, offer her a chair, one places arm around her, and ORA holds her hand.*) I'm charmed to be admitted to your jolly circle. You seem so happy, and at present I also have reason to be superlatively so.

ORA. Please give us your recipe, Miss Malinda.

MALINDA. All right, but before we settle ourselves for the recital let me look for a trespasser that might have dropped in un-awares. My advice, young ladies, is this: (*looking in the closet*) always look in your closet when coming into a vacant room. I have done it all my life. Though I have never found one yet, I always expect to sooner or later. I have a plan all laid for the capture of any scamp who lurks therein. (*Rising.*) I feel that the breeze has damaged my curls. (*Goes to glass and arranges hair.*) I am expecting a distinguished visitor any day—the Duke of Burgundy, from France. (*Broad A.*)

GIRLS. Great! Grand! Gorgeous! Glorious!

MALINDA. How sweet of you to say that! The Duke declares he will never be satisfied till he sees my farm amid the celebrated Cat skills. And then he vows he is going to storm the citadel of my heart.

BLANCHE. That is as thrilling as a romance.

RUTH. Silly, it is romance. I mean to put it on the screen.

MALINDA. You darling girl, that would be so sweet. Let me show you his picture. (*Shows large portrait.*)

MARY. Vanish, ye Knights of Old! Isn't he handsome!

NELLIE. My! His mustache just fits my dreams. It's a perfect Frenchy.

ORA. Ah, those dreamy dark eyes are ideal. Miss Malinda, I know if he storms the citadel of your heart that you will capitulate. He will be too irresistible—to utterly utter.

MALINDA. Child, don't put it in the future tense.

RUTH. Then you are already engaged?

MALINDA. Well, not exactly, dears—but you are not yet old enough to comprehend these heart mysteries. You see now that I

have reason for happiness. I came to this resort to put some roses in my cheeks—do they look rosy?

MARY. Oh yes, very.

MALINDA. Thank you sweetly, dear. The Duke likes roses.

BLANCHE. I'm sure he likes roses but I'll bet he likes "dough" better.

MALINDA. How dare you attribute so low a motive to so high-born a gentleman as the Duke of Burgundy! (*Rising.*) I shall go straight to my own room and keep to myself the thoughts of him who owns my heart.

RUTH. Miss Malinda, you are a heartless creature to leave us at this critical moment!

(*Exit MALINDA.*)

MALINDA (*outside*). "My heart is in the highlands, my heart is not here,—My heart is in the highlands a-chasing the Dear"!

NELLIE. Blanche, you said the wrong thing.

ORA. Yes, but developments are still spelling fun for us. Tomorrow the Duke arrives,—(*Dinner bell rings.*) There's our dinner bell and I'm one hungry animal! Whoever is late at the table gets the part of the chicken that goes over the fence last. (*All run out.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: MISS MALINDA'S room, chair, mirror, closet, anything else to make a cozy spot. MISS M. comes in, looks in glass, takes off hat, primps, looks lovingly at Duke's picture, places it in view, feels in handbag for letter, looks worried, searches frantically for letter, cries a little.)

MALINDA. I wonder where I could have put the dear epistle. Maybe it's a sign that I shall lose him. (*Weeps.*) But I ought not to worry for I know the dear Duke is likely to arrive any minute and he does not wish me to plow wrinkles in my brow over the loss of his letter. (*Smooths brow and powders face.*)

(*Enter MOLLY.*)

MOLLY. Miss Malinda, would ye be after having a cool drink?

MALINDA. Thank you, Molly, you are such a thoughtful girl. I'll speak a good word for you to Mikey when he comes to see you.

MOLLY. Och, Miss Malinda, ye make the roses bloom in me cheeks, but I'm afraid he's never coming, for that haythen nager said there was a letter in the office for me and there wasn't, and I don't know whither me poor heart will break or whither I'll break the black haythen's neck! (*Cries.*)

MALINDA. O well, Molly, don't cry. I have a lover, too, who is coming from over the sea and maybe they'll both be on the same boat.

MOLLY. I'm obleeged to ye for all thim noice words.

MALINDA. Now, Molly, I want to take a little beauty nap. When your letter comes I will read it for you and write your answer.

MOLLY. Thank ye swately, ma'm. (*Exit.*)

MALINDA. I must look around ere I slumber. (*Takes stick and*

feels under couch, if there be one, and in the closet, looks puzzled, listens as she pushes door a little closer.) I thought I heard a breath. I'm sure I heard a man snoring. *(Strikes match and holds at very small opening of door, runs back, eyes and mouth wide open.)* I must be brave. Maybe after all it is only a cat in there. *(Tips-toes to closet, pokes head inside, jumps back, slams door, locks it.)* Well, all things come to those who wait. I've captured the article at last. Let me meditate on the mode of procedure. *(Sits and thinks hard.)* I will lasso him and tie him up as a sort of scare-crow to his tribe. If only the Duke were here to help me!

VOICE IN CLOSET *(very deep)*. Malinda dear, it is I. I could wait no longer to see you.

MALINDA *(aside)*. That voice sounds natural. I wonder if it can be the dear Duke! I suppose he came while I was out rowing, found me gone, and just went into the closet to surprise me. It was so sweet of him to plan it that way. How shall I answer the dear fellow?

VOICE. Malinda, I love you and I long to see ze sweet face of you so much. Give me one wee word from ze sweet lips.

MALINDA. Lovey! *(She whispers it at keyhole.)*

VOICE. Dovey!

MALINDA. Did you fly to me from over the sea?

VOICE. Yes, sweetie, flew over se sea to ze?

MALINDA. Will you love me when I'm old and gray?

VOICE. Darling, yes forever and a day.

MALINDA. What token will you give me of our everlasting bliss?

VOICE. Through ze keyhole I gif you a kiss. *(Smacks lips.)*

MALINDA. O isn't he the sweetest Duke in the world!

VOICE. Sweetest, dearest, this door is my heart, you hold ze key.

MALINDA. It is so sweet to hold that key, darling Duke.

(Enter SNOWBALL.)

SNOW. Law, Miss Malinder, dar's a man all dolled up down stairs, wantin' ter see you. He am a leetle chap wid some Texas ho'ns fer a mustache. Spec you better be goin' down kase he am mighty fidgety. I cogitate he's a furriner, an you better be keerful kase he mought ho'n you wid dat mustache. *(Exit.)*

MALINDA *(at closet door)*. Dear Duke, please excuse me just ONE MINUTE. A stranger has called to see me.

VOICE. Certainly, lovey, but do hurry back!

MALINDA. O, the romance of my life is just beginning to blossom! *(Exit L.)*

(Enter MOLLY R.)

MOLLY. I wonder where be the good lady. I jist brought her some flowers. *(Puts them in vase.)* Whin me Mikey comes I'll wear a flower in me hair, so. *(Arranges it in hair at mirror.)* Och, and Mickey will wear one pinned on wid me own hands, too, and thin the widding bells! Tra-la! *(Skips.)*

(Enter SNOWBALL.)

SNOW. I 'clare ter gracious, Miss Elmarelda, is you spectin' ter wear de orange blossoms soon? Let me see how I gwine look when I stick my head in de noose. *(Puts flower in hair and cakewalks.)*

Golly, 'pears like I hear sumpin' gwine on down stars. 'Tain't all quiet long de Potomac by long shot. Bet dat furriner bring a harry-cane wid him. (*Listens.*) B'lieve to goodness day's comin' up here! Run, Patsy, ol' Afriky will ketch yo'! (*They run out.*)

(*Enter MALINDA and the DUKE of BURGUNDY.*)

MALINDA. My dear Duke, the monster imposter is locked in that closet. He must be your double!

DUKE. Ze debble! Ze debble he is! Gif me ze key! I will haf nopody playing ze Duke of Burgundy. Zare will be something to pay for zis. Pretty lady, gif me ze key. (*MALINDA hunts but can't find key.*) Ze key! ze key! I say, ze key, zat is ze question. My kingdom for ze key! (*DUKE gets very stormy, pulls hair, shakes fist, stamps foot.*)

MALINDA. I cannot find the key, dear. I had it when I went down stairs. (*Cries.*)

DUKE. How can I whip ze scoundrel wifout ze key? (*Hits door with fist.*)

MALINDA. Maybe the servants have found it, dear Duke, I'll see. (*Exit.*)

DUKE. Vexation! Cremation! Fortune is against me. (*Bangs door with foot.*) But I will be revenged. Ze scamp shall not rob me of ze pretty lady. (*Turns to door and yells.*) Speak, sir, and tell me. Do you love ze pretty lady, Miss Barlow?

VOICE. Nevermore!

DUKE. Will you ever deceive this lady again?

VOICE. Nevermore.

DUKE. Will you ever try to steal my love again?

VOICE. Nevermore.

(*Enter MALINDA with key.*)

MALINDA. Here, dear Duke, is the key. The Irish girl found it on the steps.

DUKE. O sweetheart, tell me that you are mine and make me happy forever.

MALINDA. All is yours. The citadel has long since capitulated. (*Puts her head on his shoulder and he takes her hand.*) Somehow now I don't feel half so hostile towards our prisoner.

DUKE. Sweetie, love covers a multitude of sins, but let's look at him for ze sake of our curiosity. (*Goes to door.*)

MALINDA. Ooo-o-o- I'm afraid he might hurt you, honey! (*Holds him by coat-tails.*) Oooo-oo-o!

DUKE. Don't be scared, darling. Prisoner, will you molest me or ze pretty lady if I let you out?

VOICE. Nevermore!

(*DUKE unlocks door, prisoner steps out, all girls but ORA rush in.*)

DUKE. Now, you rascal, I want you to see zat I am ze Duke of Burgundy.

RUTH. Hurrah, Miss Malinda, I see you have caught a trespasser at last.

BLANCHE. Ruth and I will hold the doors so he can't escape (*Hold entrances.*)

NELLIE. Mr. Duke, you look after Miss Malinda, and Mary and I will attend to the prisoner.

DUKE. Zank you, Mademoiselle, I would cane ze rascal if I did not have to protect ze pretty lady.

MARY. Hon. Duke and pretty lady, whenever a scamp is captured the law gives us the right of trial. I suggest that we institute Court here. All in favor say Aye.

ALL. Aye. (*Prisoner says Aye after the others.*)

MARY. So said, so done. The Duke of Burgundy and Miss Malinda Barlow are the plaintiffs. The unknown prisoner is the defendant and will plead his own case. The door-keepers and guards will serve as a jury and I will act as judge. All in favor give the word.

ALL. Aye.

MARY (*as JUDGE*). Miss Barlow, will you state to this court the nature of the offense.

MALINDA. Hon. Judge, venerable Jury, upon entering my boudoir this afternoon as is my custom I explored for trespassers. I discovered the presence of something suspicious in that closet, turned on a flashlight and there sat said prisoner; I slammed the door, meditated on my next procedure, and wished for the Duke. Immediately said prisoner assumed the personality of said Duke and made sweet love to me till I was called down stairs where the real royal gentleman stood before me. I am too nervous to say more. Said prisoner has forever incapacitated me for looking into another closet. (*Leans on DUKE.*)

DUKE. Never mind, dearie, I am to be ze flashlight to look into ze closets.

MALINDA. So sweet of you dear. (*Pats his cheek.*)

JUDGE. The Duke of Burgundy will now take the stand and speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

DUKE. Worthy Judge and Jury, I speak ze whole truth. I came from Paris to see zis pretty lady. Said prisoner try to be me. He is not me. He try to beat me out of ze pretty lady, in ze which event I go back to France with no heart in me. I had one hard time to make her see zat I was me. Zis chap almost fool ze lady out of me, in ze which event she die of a broken heart. Gentle Jury, consider punishment for a fellow zat would break ze heart of ze two of us. My heart still bleeds to zink what might have been.

JURY. O the bleeding heart, the almost broken heart of the Duke.

DUKE. Noble Jury, zare be three questions zat I wish ze prisoner to explain.

JUDGE. You have the privilege of questioning him. The prisoner will come forward and answer.

PRISONER (*stepping forward*). O learned Judge, I speak truth only.

DUKE. Who are you? Why were you here in this lady's closet? And what amends will you make if released?

PRISONER. I am the sole heir of Mr. John Smith of Virginia. I was here in the lady's closet for vacation and fun. I promise never to make love to the Duke's girl any more. Furthermore when the said Duke and the said Pretty Lady unite in matrimony I will shower

them with roses from Virginia, for nowhere do the roses bloom so sweetly as in Virginia and in Miss Malinda's cheeks. Gracious Jury, be merciful to me. (*Hangs head.*)

JUDGE. Ladies of the Jury, you have heard the arguments. Season your verdict with justice but add a drop of mercy, if you please. (*The Jury get together and confer with each other.*)

DUKE. O my lovely lady, zese troubles make you so sweet.

MALINDA. O darling Duke, I am so happy in the midst of it all.

JUDGE. The Jury finds said prisoner guilty on two charges. First of getting in the path of true love and hindering Cupid for twenty minutes, which well nigh broke the lovers' hearts. Second, guilty of scaring a lady out of her established prerogative of looking into her closet for trespassers.

JUDGE. Prisoner, rise and learn the fruits of your folly. (*Prisoner rises.*)

First—you will make full confession to the plaintiffs;

Secondly—you will shake the Duke's hand and beg pardon for assuming his personality;

Thirdly—you will kiss the pretty lady.

DUKE. Hon. Judge, I object to zat.

MALINDA. And so do I.

JUDGE. The law must be obeyed. Fourthly—you will dance at the wedding of the Duke and Miss Malinda, thereby proving to Cupid that you were only joking through the keyhole with Miss Malinda.

PRISONER. I proceed to pay the penalties imposed upon me. First.—A full confession. (*Pulls off overcoat, hat, mustache, laughing.*) I am Orale Smith, chief of the Funmakers at the Catskill resort. Second.—I beg pardon, Duke, for trying to be you. (*Shakes hands.*) Third.—Allow me to kiss you, Miss Melinda. I love you much. (*Kisses her.*) Fourth.—And now I tell you all that I am ready to dance at the coming wedding to show Dan Cupid that I was only joking when I played the Duke.

JUDGE. The Jury may now be dismissed and this court—

PRISONER. Hold a minute ! I have a charge to bring against another party.

JUDGE. Against whom?

PRISONER. The Duke of Burgundy.

SEVERAL. Oh, the Duke! the Duke!

DUKE. Against me? Empossible!

JUDGE. On what grounds?

PRISONER. Intent to deceive. He is no more of a duke than I am. He's an imposter.

DUKE. Oh Miss Malinda, what shall I do? Zey have discovered.

MALINDA. Perhaps it is better to tell them.

DUKE. Your Honor, let me explain. You see ze American ladies love so much ze grand titles for ze marriage zat we make for ourselves ze Duke of Burgundy. Ze idea was wonderful.

SEVERAL. Marvelous!

PRISONER. I have still another charge to bring.

JUDGE. What? Another?

PRISONER. Yes, your Honor. I don't believe he is even a Frenchman. He is an American in disguise. See how that mustache is fastened on.

SEVERAL. Yes, so it is.

JUDGE. What have you to say? Is the charge false or true? What is your name?

DUKE. You tell them, Malinda. The cat is out of the bag.

MALINDA. He is Caleb Jones from — (*near-by town*). I can tell no more because—because that is all of our secret.

BLANCHE. Then you knew it all the time?

MALINDA. Certainly and the deception has afforded us much amusement.

RUTH. Oh Miss Malinda, you do love a joke after all.

MALINDA. Yes, my dear, when it harms no one, for as Shakespeare says, "All's well that ends well." And remember it is always wise to look in your closet.

CURTAIN



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